

*Testimony  
By Robin Schneider  
For the Capitol City Compassion Club  
January 19, 2010*

To: Hon. Wayne Kuipers, Chairman and Members  
Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Senate Bills 616-618

I am testifying in opposition to Senate bills 616-618. These bills would undermine the Initiated Act 1 or the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act of 2008, as overwhelmingly approved by the voters of Michigan. My testimony will relate to the impact that this Act has had on patients like me.

The Initiated Act 1 provides for the legal use of cannabis to control chronic pain associated with several illnesses. Many patients have suffered pain with only pharmaceutical relief, drugs that are often addictive or that have unacceptable side effects. For these reasons, patients have often suffered without medicinal interventions. Others have sought relief found in the underground, illicit market. Neither of these conditions is acceptable.

Cannabis is safe, effective and non-addictive. It can be used in many forms: butters, oils, other edibles or suppositories, inhaled through vaporizers or in smokable form. Different forms are more helpful than others for various medical conditions or based on personal preference.

Medical cannabis is used for safe pain relief, regulated by the Michigan Department of Community Health. But, this new and growing industry is becoming self-regulating, also. A network of small growers, also known as caregivers, is finding agreement on a price ceiling, establishing funding pools for low-income patients, and agreeing on a central mission: *To provide high quality medical cannabis at an affordable cost for qualifying patients.* Caregivers are sharing resources, information, equipment and trading strains of cannabis to provide for individual patients, building a support network designed to conform to the shared mission.

The system, although just developing, is working well. The Capitol City Compassion Club is opposing these bills because they would threaten the medical model, focused on patient needs, and provide for a profit-driven industry, in its place. We find that unacceptable.

If these bills are passed, I along with many others will be forced to pack up my family and thousands of dollars worth of equipment and move to a state that supports our industry. Caregivers are good for patients and good for Michigan's economy. Please do not take this source of revenue away from the very people who voted for Initiated Act 1. Thank you.